Government of Tamil Nadu had purchased three ships from Japan;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Central Government had given clearance to the Government of Tamil Nadu for the purchase of three ships from Japan; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) to (c) M|s Poompuhar Shipping Corporation Limited a Government of Tamil Nadu Undertaking was given clearance by the Central Government to acquire 3 bulk carriers from Japan, for the specific purpose of carrying of coal for the thermal power stations of the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board from Calcutta|Haldia|Paradip|Vizag to Madras|Tuticorin.

Import of Railway Coaches

1711. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to import railway coaches in technology transfer agreement; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Tender for the import of 60 coaches with transfer of technology has been opened and is in the process of finalisation. In all, seven firms had participated in the tender out of which offers of four firms have been short listed for further processing. This import represents state of the art technology which is not available indigenously.

Railway expansion work

1712. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to undertake the railway expansion work only in those States which are ill-connected by trains and specially in backward areas of the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Provision of rail connection to remote and backward areas is one of the criteria for taking up construction of New Lines. Approved New line projects as per details given in Railway Budget include such lines.

Adoption of new technology by Railways

1713. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to adopt new technology to gear-up rail network in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Broadly, new technology is planned to be introduced in the following major areas;

(i) Higher Horsepower and more fuel-efficient electric locomotives.

(ii) Higher Horsepower and more fuel-efficient diesel locomotives.